



CITY OF SAN ANTONIO

FIRE PREVENTION DIVISION
1901 SOUTH ALAMO STREET
SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS 78204
(210) 207-8410 FAX: (210) 207-7949

FIRE LANES/FIRE APPARATUS ACCESS ROADS (IFC Chapter 5, Section 503 and local amendments)

DEFINITIONS:

FIRE LANE shall mean any area appurtenant to entrances or exits of a building deemed necessary by the Fire Chief or his designee to remain free and clear of parked vehicles for access to such buildings in case of fire or other emergency and designated by him as such, and may include sidewalks, driveways, portions of parking lots, or any other area adjacent to or near building entrances or exits, or any fire hydrant. A fire lane is not necessarily intended for vehicular traffic other than fire apparatus.

FIRE APPARATUS ACCESS ROAD is a road that provides fire apparatus access from a fire station to a facility, building or portion thereof. This is a general term inclusive of all other terms such as fire lane, public street, private street, parking lot lane and access roadway.

DESIGNATED PREMISES shall mean property being used for a purpose allowed as a permitted use in an Apartment District, Office District, Local Retail District, Business District, Commercial District, Manufacturing District, Multiple Family Residence District, Mobile Home District, Townhouse Residence District, Industry District, or Planned Unit Development District as those terms are used in Chapter 35 of the San Antonio Code whether or not the premises are so zoned, or a public or private school, or a church, or a facility owned or operated by the City or Bexar County or by a city-owned utility, where off street parking is provided on the premises for occupants thereof and others. IFC section 202

Fire Apparatus Access Roads are required to:

1. Extend to within 150 feet of all portions of the facility and all portions of the exterior walls of the first story as measured by an approved route around the exterior of the building. (some exceptions apply) IFC 503.1.1

Exception: The fire code official is authorized to increase the dimension of 150 feet if:

- a. The building is equipped throughout with an approved automatic sprinkler system.
- b. Fire apparatus access roads cannot be installed because of location on property, topography, waterways, nonnegotiable grades or other similar conditions, and an approved alternative means of fire protection is provided.
- c. There are not more than two Group R-3 or Group U occupancies.



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2. Have an unobstructed width of not less than 20 feet (except for approved security gates) and an unobstructed vertical clearance of not less than 13 feet 6 inches. IFC 503.2.1
3. Be designed and maintained to support the imposed loads of fire apparatus. IFC 503.2.3
4. Have a grade not to exceed 12 degrees. IFC 503.2.7
5. Have approved turning radius. IFC 503.2.4 The turning radii of a fire apparatus access roadway shall require a minimum of fifty (50) feet outside radius and a minimum of twenty-five (25) feet clear distance to the inside radius on all turns in excess of thirty (30) degrees. IFC 503.2.4
6. Have approved mountable curbs when approved by the Fire Chief or his designee. Drivable grass surfaces such as concrete grass pavers are permitted when approved by the Fire Chief or his designee and in accordance with Section 104.9 (Alternative Materials) IFC 503.2.3
7. Have an approved turn-around for dead-end access roads in excess of 150 feet. 503.2.5
8. May have the minimum width increased if authorized by the fire code official. IFC 503.2.2
9. May have more than one access road required as determined by the fire code official. 503.1.2
10. Access to buildings with high piled combustible storage shall comply with the special provisions set forth in IFC chapter 23.

Section 503.7 THE FIRE CHIEF OR HIS DESIGNEE TO DESIGNATE FIRE LANES. Add Section: The Fire Chief, or his designee, is hereby authorized to designate fire lanes on designated premises, as defined herein, where such areas must be free of parked vehicles and other obstructions to provide ready access to buildings therein, in case of fire or other emergencies. The designation by the Fire Chief or his designee of such fire lanes shall never be held to make the city responsible for the maintenance of such fire lanes, but the owner of such property shall continue to be responsible for the maintenance of such area. Further, owners of the private property or their designated representative may request that additional fire lanes be designated by the Fire Chief or his designee

503.11 ABANDONMENT OF FIRE LANE. Add Section: No owner, manager or person in charge of any premises served by a required fire lane shall abandon or close any such fire lane without the written permission of the Fire Chief.



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MARKING

Section 503.1.1.1 FIRE APPARATUS ACCESS ROADS. Amend to read as follows: Upon the designation of a fire lane pursuant to this ordinance, the Fire Chief shall give notice of such designation to the owner of such designated premise, directing the owner to cause signs to be posted at the expense of the owner, at designated locations, lettered "Fire Lane – No Parking at any Time. Ord. 54547" Such signs shall be of standard size and color, of standard lettering and mounting, conforming to specifications established by the Director of Public Works. In addition to the signs, the owners of such designated premises at their option, or, if so directed by the Fire Chief shall paint all fire lane curbs red with white-stenciled letters stating "Fire Lane, No Parking". Lettering for the curbs shall use four (4) inch lettering with a distance of not more than forty (40) feet between wordings. It shall be unlawful to park any vehicle other than an authorized emergency vehicle in a designated fire lane when such signs are in place or such red curbing exists. In areas where the fire lane may not be clearly defined, the Fire Chief may require a four (4) inch red stripe be painted that defines the boundaries of the fire lane.

Signs: See diagram

1. Under the guidelines and restrictions of the City Fire Lane Ordinance, (54547, Section 15 – 82.4) an independent contractor may install the standard size sign only on non city property identified as "designated premises" in Section 202 of San Antonio Code
2. Signs installed by the City of San Antonio shall only be of the standard size (18" x 24"), as specified by Texas Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices for Streets and Highways – code R7 – 35.
3. Signs should have RED letters and border on a WHITE background.
4. For a designated fire lane less than forty (40) feet : One (1) sign with a double arrow
5. For a designated fire lane from forty (40) feet to ninety (90) feet: two (2) signs with right and left arrows.
6. For a designated fire lane of one hundred (100) feet or more: three (3) signs with right/left and double arrows in the middle.
7. The bottom edge of the sign must be at least seven (7) feet above grade where the sign is installed and at least two (2) feet from the curb edge.

PARKING

UNLAWFUL TO PARK IN FIRE LANE. Add Section: It is hereby declared to be unlawful to park any vehicle other than an authorized emergency vehicle in any area designated as a fire lane in accordance with the requirements set forth in the Fire Code. (Ord. No. 54547, 12-12-81)



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Section 503.8 SUMMONS TO BE ISSUED FOR PARKING VIOLATION. Add Section: A summons or notice to appear in answer to charge of parking in violation of this article, specifying the location of the fire lane in which such violation occurred and the date and time of such violation, may be issued by any police officer or any member of the Arson Investigating unit or inspectors in the Fire Prevention Bureau of the Fire Department. (Ord. No. 41547, 1, 12-7-72; Ord. No. 49168, 1, 3-23-78; Ord. No. 54547, 12-12-81)

Section 503.9 REMOVAL OF VEHICLE BY PROPERTY OWNER. Add Section: The owner, or the agent of the owner, may have any motor vehicle that is parked in a required fire lane, except any authorized emergency vehicle, removed and stored at the expense of the owner or operator of the vehicle.

The owner of the premises, or his agent, who has a vehicle removed and stored, is not liable for damages incurred by the owner or operator of the vehicle as a result of removal or storage, if the vehicle is removed by a vehicle wrecker service insured against liability for property damage incurred in towing vehicles and is stored by a storage company insured against liability for property damage incurred in the storage of vehicles.

Section 503.10 REMOVAL OF VEHICLE BY FIRE CHIEF. Add Section: Any vehicle parked in any designated fire lane may be removed at the vehicle owners' expense on authorization of the Fire Chief or his designee under the following conditions:

1. When the vehicle violated the fire lane ordinance by parking in a fire lane, or
2. When a vehicle blocks the ingress/egress of a business, theater, night club, apartment complex, gymnasium or a place of assembly, or
3. When a vehicle's presence threatens the life safety of the public by impeding the ability of the fire apparatus and emergency medical equipment to respond to an emergency.

The Fire Chief shall cause such vehicle to be removed by the towing service operating under a contract with the city and shall further cause such vehicle to be impounded in one of the Police Department Vehicle Storage sections.



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GATES:

503.4 Obstruction of fire apparatus access roads. Fire apparatus access roads shall not be obstructed in any manner, including the parking of vehicles. The minimum widths and clearances established in Section 503.2.1 shall be maintained at all times.

503.5 Required gates or barricades. The fire code official is authorized to require the installation and maintenance of gates or other approved barricades across fire apparatus access roads, trails or other accessways, not including public streets, alleys or highways.

503.5.1 Secured gates and barricades. When required, gates and barricades shall be secured in an approved manner. Roads, trails and other accessways that have been closed and obstructed in the manner prescribed by Section 503.5 shall not be trespassed on or used unless authorized by the owner and the fire code official.

Exception: The restriction on use shall not apply to public officers acting within the scope of duty.

503.6 Security gates. The installation of security gates across a fire apparatus access road shall be approved by the fire chief. Where security gates are installed, they shall have an approved means of emergency operation. The security gates and the emergency operation shall be maintained operational at all times.

503.6.1 Direction of Swing Security gates installed across a Fire Apparatus Access Road shall swing in the direction of travel towards the building or open horizontally to avoid backing up of Fire Apparatus and to allow for an expedited response.



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D103.5 Fire apparatus access road gates. Gates securing the fire apparatus access roads shall comply with all of the following criteria:

1. The minimum gate width shall be 20 feet (6096 mm).
2. Gates shall be of the swinging or sliding type.
3. Construction of gates shall be of materials that allow manual operation by one person.
4. Gate components shall be maintained in an operative condition at all times and replaced or repaired when defective.
5. Electric gates shall be equipped with a means of opening the gate by fire department personnel for emergency access. Emergency opening devices shall be approved by the fire code official.
6. Manual opening gates shall not be locked with a padlock or chain and padlock unless they are capable of being opened by means of forcible entry tools.
7. Locking device specifications shall be submitted for approval by the fire code official



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COMMON FIRE LANE QUESTIONS

1. Why do I need a fire lane?
A. The Fire Code requires them for fire apparatus access. *Section 503 of the International Fire Code (IFC) 2006*
2. Why can't I just designate and paint my own fire lane?
A. Only the Fire Chief or his designee may designate a fire lane. *IFC section 503.7*
3. Is the Fire Chief or his designee the only person authorized to designate fire lanes?
A. Yes. *IFC section 503.7*
4. Isn't just a red curb enough to designate a fire lane?
A. No. Signs are required. *IFC section 503.1.1.1*
5. Do I need both the sign and the painted curb with fire lane – no parking?
A. The sign is required. The painted curb is optional unless directed by the Fire Chief. The Fire Chief or his designee may require both. *IFC 503.1.1.1*
6. Are signs other than those prescribed by the city legal fire lane signs?
A. No. You must comply with the standard size and design per code.
7. How do I know where to place the signs?
A. After application and plan submittal, a fire plan reviewer or fire inspector will map out the locations and number of signs required.
8. Where do I get these signs and how much do they cost?
A. The city will only place signs on city owned property. A sign company can make your fire lane signs. The prices are set by the independent companies.

STANDARD SIZE SIGN



RED LETTERS & BORDER ON
WHITE BACKGROUND

LESS THAN 40': ONE SIGN WITH DOUBLE ARROW
40' TO 90': TWO SIGNS WITH RIGHT AND LEFT ARROWS
100' OR MORE: THREE SIGNS WITH RIGHT/LEFT AND DOUBLE
ARROWS IN THE MIDDLE.

A SIGN SHOULD BE VISIBLE TO THE DRIVER